

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6569

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 2169

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SF

SUBJECT: SSRC LEADER DISCUSSES STUDENT ATTITUDES

REF: JOHANNESBURG 2066

1. SUMMARY: THE SOWETO STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, WHILE SUFFERING ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS OF ITS OWN, SUPPORTS THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, SEES BANTU EDUCATION AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM, AND HAS MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE US ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. CONOFF MET WITH SSRC FIGURE JABU MAZIBUKO UNDER AUSPICES OF ORLANDO HIGH HEADMASTER W. KAMBULE. MAZIBUKO HAS LONG BEEN INVOLVED IN SSRC AND IS ACTIVELY SOUGHT BY POLICE. HE SERVED TEMPORARILY AS SSRC CHAIRMAN WHEN DAN MONTSISI WAS DETAINED AND PRIOR TO THE ELECTION OF TROFOMO SONO (THE PRESENT CHAIRMAN). MAZIBUKO, ALTHOUGH WARY INITIALLY, AGREED TO FUTURE MEETING WITH JOHANNESBURG CONGEN OFFICIALS IF HIS SAFETY COULD BE ASSURED.

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3. MAZIBUKO SAID THE POLICE HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN PENETRATING THE SSRC AND THE SSRC LEADERSHIP IS CONSTANTLY ON THE RUN BECAUSE THE POLICE HAVE BEEN WELL SERVED BY A NETWORK OF INFORMERS. HE CONFIRMED THE PRESENT SSRC CHAIRMAN, TROFOMO SONO, IS RECOVERING FROM A BULLET WOUND IN THE SHOULDER THAT WAS SERIOUS BUT HE IS WELL ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

4. MAZIBUKO SAID THE SSRC SUPPORTED THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, BOTH COLLECTIVELY AS A GROUP AND INDIVIDUALLY AS PEOPLE TO BE TRUSTED. HE SAID COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AND THE SSRC HAD SOMEWHAT BROKEN DOWN BECAUSE OF POLICE PRESSURE ON THE SSRC LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFICULTIES THE SSRC WAS SUFFERING AT THE MOMENT. HE STATED THE SLOW TRICKLE OF STUDENTS BACK TO CLASS SHOULDN'T BE CONSTRUED AS A MEASURE OF THE COMMITTEE'S INFLUENCE WITH THE STUDENTS BECAUSE MANY STUDENTS HAD YET TO BE ASSURED THAT THE SSRC CALL TO END THE BOYCOTT (REFTEL) WAS A LEGITIMATE ONE, NOT A POLICE TRICK. HE ADDED THE SSRC WAS TRYING TO GET THE WORD OUT BUT IT WAS DIFFICULT DUE TO THE AFORE-MENTIONED REASONS.

5. ON THE SUBJECT OF BANTU EDUCATION, HE SAID THE SSRC WOULD CONTINUE TO ATTACK BANTU EDUCATION BECAUSE THEY SAW IT AS A VULNERABLE TARGET AND ONE OF THE MAIN PROPS OF APARTHEID. THE STUDENTS FEEL IF BANTU EDUCATION CAN BE OVERTHROWN, THEN THE SPILLOVER EFFECTS WILL CAUSE OTHER APARTHEID INSTITUTIONS TO BE DONE AWAY WITH AS WELL.

6. MAZIBUKO GAVE THE OPINION THAT THERE WAS SOME CONFUSION WITHIN THE SSRC ABOUT THE US ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT, DESPITE THE TENDENCY OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS GROUPS TO CRITICIZE THE US, PARTICULARLY IN

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CONVERSATIONS WITH US OFFICIALS, THE US IS STILL THEIR GREATEST HOPE. HE SPOKE FAVORABLY OF PRESIDENT CARTER, BUT LESS FAVORABLY OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG. HE SAID AMB YOUNG'S RECENT VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA HAD RAISED SUSPICIONS, PARTICULARLY HIS ASSERTION THAT HE MET WITH SSRC MEMBERS. MAZIBUKO EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT YOUNG HAD MET ANYONE FROM THE SOWETO SRC. HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT AMB YOUNG MUST BE WORKING "HAND IN GLOVE" WITH THE SAG IF THEY ALLOWED HIM TO COME TO SOUTH AFRICA.

7. COMMENT: MAZIBUKO'S CREDENTIALS AS A LEADING FIGURE IN THE SSRC SEEM WELL FOUNDED. WHILE NOT AS ARTICULATE AS SOME OTHERS, HE IS POLITICIZED AND SEEMS TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP OVER THOSE AROUND HIM. WHILE HE SPOKE OF HARASSMENT BY THE POLICE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS WHETHER HE MIGHT NOT ALSO BE A POLICE INFORMANT, ALTHOUGH POST HAS NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT HE IS COOPERATING WITH THE POLICE IN ANY WAY. HIS COMMENTS ABOUT AMB YOUNG APPEAR ILLOGICAL, NAMELY AMB YOUNG IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED BECAUSE HE WAS ALLOWED TO COME TO SOUTH AFRICA, YET HE IS CLOSE TO MAINSTREAM OF "BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS" OPINION.

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